

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 11343

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PE, CI, AR
SUBJECT: CHILE-PERU TENSIONS OVER BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO SEA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 8038

1. WE SHARE THE GOA PERCEPTION OF HEIGHTENED TENSIONS BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE PRIMARILY DUE TO THE CURRENT DIPLOMATIC IMPASSE OVER THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR QUESTION AND GOP MILITARY PURCHASES. SOME EFFORTS HOWEVER ARE BEING MADE TO KEEP TENSIONS UNDER CONTROL AND THE DECEMBER 16 VISIT OF NAVY CHIEF AND JUNTA MEMBER, ADMIRAL PARODI, TO CHILE MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THAT EFFORT. THE LIMA PRESS STILL TALKS OF A MORALES BERMUDEZ/PINOCHEZ MEETING SOME TIME NEXT YEAR.

2. REGARDIN THE PURCHASE OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT, GOP MILITARY LEADERS PRIVATELY EXPRESS AWARENESS OF THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE WHICH MIGHT ACCOMPANY THE PRESENCE OF A LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET ADVISORS. THEREFORE THE GOP CLAIMS THAT SOVIET TECHNICIANS WILL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND UNDER STRICT CONTROL. WE DO NOT AGREE WITH THE GOA VIEW THAT CUBANS WOULD BE MORE
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ACCEPTABLE TO PERU THAN RUSSIANS. CUBANS WERE INFLUENTIAL UP TO THE REMOVAL OF PRIME MINISTER FERNANDEZ MALDONADO IN JULY BUT PERU/CUBAN RELATIONS HAVE COOLED CONSIDERABLY SINCE THEN. THE GOP IS CONVINCED THAT CUBANS HAVE BEEN MEDDLING IN PERU'S INTERNAAL AFFAIRS, MOST RECENTLY EXACERBATING A LENGTHY AND SOMETIMES VIOLENT FISHERMEN'S STRIKE. THE MILITARY,

ESPECIALLY THE NAVE, WOULD PROBABLY FIND CUBAN ADVISORS UNACCEPT-
ABLE, BARRING A DESPERATION WAR-TIME APPEAL FOR SUPPORT. THE
ARGENTINES MUST, OF COURSE, (JUST AS WE DO) TAKE THAT
CONTINGENCY INTO ACCOUNT AND BE PREPARED TO MEET IT SHOULD IT ARISE.

3. IF THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN OFFICE AGAIN RAISES THE SUBJECT OF
CHILE/PERU TENSIONS, THE EMBASSY MIGHT WELL ENCOURAGE THE GOA
TO EXPRESS ITS CONCERNS TO PERU INCLUDING THE ARGENTINE PERCEPTION
THAT SOVIET OR CUBAN POLITICAL INFLUENCE MIGHT INCREASE AS A
CUBAN INVOLEMENT IN POTENTIAL CONFLICT UNACCEPTABLE IT SHOULD
SO INFORM THE PERUVIANS. FINALLX THE GOA MIGHT MAKE THE POINT
THAT THE LEVEL OF PERUVIAN ARMS PPURCHASES ITSELF GIVEN CAUSE
FOR CONERN ON THE PART OF ITS SOUTH AMERICAN NEIGHBORS. DEAN

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